

## LEARNING THE BASICS

### SUPPORT COORDINATION

#### **Overview:**

Every individual who is determined eligible for services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities is entitled to receive support coordination. Support coordinators help people with disabilities and their families identify and obtain needed services and supports, regardless if these are natural supports, funded, or local community resources. They also advocate for, monitor, and evaluate services along with the individuals, their families or guardians. A key role of the support coordinator is to assist people with the process and paperwork necessary to obtain services. The system of multiple agencies providing services to persons with disabilities can be complex and confusing. Support coordinators provide a “single point of entry” into services. Services and supports should be developed around the individual and family rather than trying to fit them into existing services merely because of availability. Support coordinators should utilize and strengthen formal and informal resources. Informal resources include family, friends, co-workers and neighbors (The Arc, 1990).

Support coordinators conduct the following activities:

- **Planning Supports:** Planning supports has two components: identifying the needs of the person being supported and creating an action plan that will support the person in meeting those needs.
- **Linking Resources:** Matching the unique support needs of individuals and families (identified in the plan) with resources in the community. Linking may involve researching existing resources, developing new resources, making referrals to collaborating agencies with information and follow-up support, writing service authorizations and coordinating federal, state and community programs to achieve necessary supports.
- **Quality Enhancement:** Monitoring and assessing the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of services and supports received through an ongoing review process.
- **Documentation:** Maintaining appropriate records in accordance with federal/state programs, policies, and procedures.
- **Transition/Transfer of Case Responsibility:** Ensuring, when a case is transferred either within the Regional Office or to another agency, that the transition does not interfere with services and supports and that all necessary information is shared with the new staff.
- **Personal Plan Mentoring:** Mentoring other service coordinators to improve their skills, by assisting with the facilitation and development of a person centered plan. This is usually done by experienced service coordinators or quality improvement staff, to help newer service coordinators to learn how to perform this crucial task.
- **Building Relationships:** Establishing strong, trusting relationships with the person being supported and the others involved with that person. This is probably the single most

important element of quality service coordination. When this is present, the quality of supports and services improves.

- **Knowledge Enrichment:** Continuing one's education and professional growth. This includes attending conferences and seminars, and equips us to provide the most up-to-date information to people we support.
- **Networking:** Developing community relationships and community support systems which benefit the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Networking is distinguished from linking resources in that networking is not related to specific supports for a particular individual or family.

For more information regarding TCM billable activities, refer to the the Technical Assistance Manual <http://dmh.mo.gov/docs/dd/tcmtamanual.pdf>.

## SUPPORT COORDINATOR PERSONAL SAFETY

### **Overview:**

Sensitivity to and concern for one's safety should be the number one priority in everyday life in our community. We have historically visited with individuals and families in their homes all over the state. It is with this in mind that we must look at the following guidelines and suggested procedures. Know your agency policy and procedures in regard to personal safety. In any of the below situations, it is important to communicate with your supervisor regarding concerns.

When visiting homes, even those homes of persons known to the support coordinator, the following should be practiced:

- A. Be aware if homes are in extremely isolated areas of the county or state.
- B. Be aware of historically dangerous places in your area.
- C. When driving up to a home, look for dogs before getting out of the vehicle.
- D. Look for multiple cars in the driveway or around the house.
- E. Be alert to people around the house.
- F. Be alert to strong chemical smells or odors.
- G. If you observe children having easy access to items that cause you to be concerned for your or their safety, or if you feel something is not right: **LEAVE THE HOME IMMEDIATELY.**
- H. **If it is obvious that a child or children are in danger, please HOTLINE this information to the DSS Children's Division: 800-392-3738.**
- I. Set up the next meeting in a public place.
- J. Your local police or Sheriff's department is a good resource for additional training and consultation regarding personal and office safety.